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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [BB](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: BARBADOS: OP-ED RILES LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: On August 26, a leading daily newspaper ran a half-page op-ed piece in its weekly "As A Matter Of Fact" column, which offended Barbados' Jewish community. Intended as criticism of the armed conflict in Lebanon, the article degenerated into the propaganda of intolerance. The paper printed an apology on August 29 dissociating itself from the views expressed by the author and disavowing the op-ed's anti-Semitic sentiments. Fortunately, there have been no violent repercussions in response to either the article or the reaction to it. End Summary.

¶2. (U) In an August 26 op-ed in "The Barbados Advocate," a leading daily newspaper, regular columnist David "Joey" Harper made several insulting and erroneous remarks which were an affront to the Jewish community. Referring to the Jewish people as "stiff necked, wicked" and "uncontrollable," he also accused them of having an "ultimate Aryan agenda" and being "Bush administration lackeys." Harper is the Chairman of the Child Care Board and the Chief Executive Officer for the ruling Barbados Labour Party (BLP). This is not the first time he has expressed incendiary opinions, nor is the Jewish community the sole target of his condemnation. He has also lambasted homosexuals, teachers, and the Anglican church for various perceived offenses and shortcomings.

OPINION

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¶3. (U) Harper's article appears to be intended to criticize the recent conflict in Lebanon, as he begins his harangue by stating that no one people has the right to determine which groups have the right to exist in a world created for all men. He laments the loss of innocent life from Hiroshima to Lebanon. Harper then digresses into an anti-Semitic rant on the historic relationship between God and the Jews. His argument goes on to include criticism of the Bush administration and American foreign policy for subjecting the Middle East to "American style terrorism" and murdering innocents in the name of "collateral damage." Harper concludes by exhorting "the Jews" to accept the teachings of the New Testament to allow world peace to flourish.

REACTION

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¶4. (U) Members of the local Jewish community protested the paper's publication of this hate-filled, anti-Semitic diatribe, noting in calls, e-mail messages and letters to the editor that "hatred corrupts one's ability to relay the facts accurately," and "incites violence." The Advocate's editorial committee took quick steps to distance itself from

the sentiments espoused in Harper's piece, but took full responsibility for inadvertently allowing it to be printed.

COMMENT

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15. (SBU) Members of the small local Jewish community have enjoyed a generally peaceful coexistence with the rest of Barbados society since 1654. They report, however, that in times of national or global distress, articles and sentiments such as those expressed by Harper do occasionally surface. They attribute such sentiments to incomplete information on world events and the insularity and narrow social views of the majority.

16. (SBU) Insensitive and slanderous remarks, while not the norm, are not uncommon in the sheltered, homogeneous culture of Barbados where such comments about "others," usually foreigners, are unremarkable. The paper, which has made similar publishing blunders before, is culpable for a lack of journalistic editing standards rather than for supporting any particular ideology. Fortunately, there have been no/no reports of discrimination or violence as a result of the op-ed or the rebuttal letters. Nonetheless, that a prominent individual holds such views and finds it appropriate to share them publicly is disturbing.

KRAMER